

22 September 2020

Dear PHO Chief Executives,

PPE for general practice

Since revising the guidance for the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) from the central supply we have become aware of concerns regarding the settings for primary care. There have also been variable approaches to the provision of PPE to general practices between DHBs. General practices carry out a significant portion of the healthcare work in New Zealand, and it is important that they are provided with the correct PPE.

To ensure general practices have access to the appropriate PPE, we have revised the guidance for the provision from the central supply. Providers within Category C (including general practice) will be able to access masks from the central supply at no charge in Alert Level 2, when supported by robust evidence of demand and forecasting information. We will also supply those general practices identified as testing for COVID-19 with the full PPE required for swabbing at all Alert Levels.

Masks and PPE will be provided for clinical use only. It is not provided for the purposes of providing to the public or for use by non-clinical staff.

In order to ensure masks are available in the event of an outbreak, we will soon distribute two week's stock to each general practice to be held in contingency for use at Alert Levels 2, 3, and 4. Four weeks stock will be distributed to general practice in the Auckland region, reflecting the fact that they remain at Alert Level 2 for at least two more weeks.

If we move back to Alert Levels 2, 3 or 4, the Ministry will distribute masks directly to general practice via 'push' orders. They will receive masks based on practice size and patient throughput, and PPE based on the amount of swabbing they are carrying out.

The revised principles for supply are attached and will soon be published on the Ministry website. We encourage you to continue to refer to the webpage rather than relying on the attachment or printed versions, as there may continue to be minor revisions made.

It would be appreciated if you could further distribute this information to general practices as required. If there are any questions with the process, or issues with orders, please contact COVID.HealthSupplyChain@health.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kel-Watson', is centered on a light yellow rectangular background.

Dr Kelvin Watson
Group Manager, COVID-19 Immunisation, Testing and Supply